



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6502

May 8, 2001

The Honorable Gale Norton
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Norton,

As a conservative, I am distressed by encroachments upon our liberty, however small they may be. For that reason, I wanted to bring to your attention an issue, though small, that I believe has the potential to become a significant privacy concern for the millions of Americans who use park roads.

The National Park Service undertook an unprecedented expansion of the use of photographic radar cameras on federal roads last year. It first installed cameras on roads located within the Commonwealth of Virginia as part of an authorized *demonstration* project. Now the Park Service, without Congressional approval, is planning to turn this into a revenue-raising system that issues tickets to motorists.

In essence, what these cameras do is turn the duty and judgment of law enforcement officers over to a machine. Citizens lose their constitutionally guaranteed right to face their accuser in court when the due process of law is traded for the efficiency of revenue generation. You can't argue your case to a machine.

People feel the burden where similar systems have been put in place. In the District of Columbia, for example, red light cameras indiscriminately mail out tickets to mourners involved in funeral processions and even ambulances and police cars. Last year, the District reluctantly admitted that it had unfairly issued tickets to at least 20,000 motorists with a *single* camera.

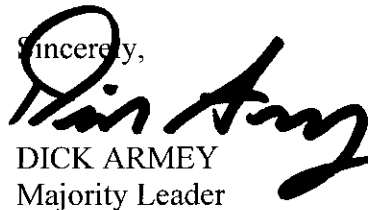
I'm committed to doing what it takes to make our roads safer, but not at the cost of our fundamental rights. Likewise, I am concerned that this may be seen as a step toward a Big Brother surveillance state, where the government monitors the comings and goings of its citizens.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter the Governor of Virginia sent to me last year expressing his opposition to the Park Service's plan. Not only did the Park Service fail to consult him on this matter, it did not even have the courtesy to notify him when it opened a public comment period. The federal government should not impose this system on a state that sees it as a most unwelcome development.

The Honorable Gale Norton
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I have confidence that you will appreciate the privacy concerns that Governor Gilmore and I have raised. I respectfully urge you to review former Secretary Babbitt's spy camera program and take the steps needed to protect the privacy of the millions of Americans who use and depend on park roads.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Arme". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "D" and a long, sweeping "A".

DICK ARMEY
Majority Leader



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

James S. Gilmore, III
Governor

December 8, 2000

The Honorable Richard K. Armey
Majority Leader
U. S. House of Representatives
H-329 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Armey:

Thank you for your letter of October 12, 2000, bringing to my attention the National Park Service's plan to expand the use of photographic radar cameras on several federal roads. As you stated in your letter, I vetoed legislation enacted by the 2000 Session of the Virginia General Assembly, which would have expanded the use of cameras at intersections for the purpose of enforcing traffic laws.

In response to your question, I was unfortunately not consulted and thus did not give comment to the National Park Service regarding the ominous increase in traffic surveillance systems on our national parkways. It further concerns me that such invasive policies could be implemented without congressional discussion and approval.

The expansion of the government's power to invade the privacy of our citizens raises questions of personal privacy and freedom. While there is clearly the necessity to assure public safety through effective enforcement of traffic laws, the use of cameras, operating without human judgment reduces our system of justice to trial by machinery without regard to the presumption of innocence.

I concur that there is an ever-present danger of surveillance cameras encroaching upon the lives of innocent and free people. I have enclosed a copy of my veto message, which was sent to and consequently sustained by Virginia's General Assembly. Thank you, Congressman Armey, for bringing this issue to my attention. And thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of the freedom loving citizens of America.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James S. Gilmore, III".

James S. Gilmore, III
Governor of Virginia

Enclosure